

# Summary of Current *Recreational* Fish Regulations in Delaware for 2012 (Saltwater species)

Species	Recreational Minimum Size Limit	Recreational Season	Recreational Creel Limit per Angler
American eel	6"	Open Year Round	50
Bass, striped*	28"*	Open Year Round*	2 by hook and line only
<i>De. River, DE Bay, and Tributaries</i>	<i>20" to 26" slot length limit</i>	<i>July 1 – August 31</i>	<i>2 by hook and line only</i>
Blue crabs	5" Hard; 3.5 Soft; 3" Peeler	Open Year Round	1 Bushel
Black sea bass	12.5"	Open Jan 1 – Feb 28 May 22 – Oct 11 and Nov 1 – Dec 31	15 25 25
Bluefish	No minimum size	Open Year Round	10
Catfish	No minimum size	Open Year Round	No limit
Clams, Hard	1.5"	Open Year Round††	100 – resident; 50 - non-resident
Croaker, Atlantic	8"	Open Year Round	No limit
Drum, black	16" minimum	Open Year Round	3
Drum, red	20-27", none > 27"	Open Year Round	5
Flounder, Summer	18"	Closed Oct 24 – Dec 31	4
Flounder, Winter	12"	Open Feb. 11 – April 10	2
Lobster	3 3/8" Minimum Carapace length**; Maximum length 5¼ inches for both males and females	Open Year Round	Using Pots (no limit); 2 per diver
Mackerel, Spanish	14"	Open Year Round	10
River herring (blueback & alewife)	None may be taken	CLOSED	None may be taken
Scup	8"	Open Year Round	50
Shad (Hickory and American)	No minimum size	Open Year Round; Closed Nanticoke River & its tributaries	10 combined species
Smooth dogfish	No minimum size	Open Year Round	No limit
Spiny dogfish	No minimum size	Open Year Round	No limit
Shark, sand bar & sand tiger	None may be taken	CLOSED	None may be taken
Sharks,coastal (Group A see below)†	54"	Open Year Round	1 per vessel or 1 per shore angler
Sharks,coastal (Group B see below)†	54"	Open Jan. 1 – May 14; July 16 – Dec. 31	1 per vessel or 1 per shore angler
Spot	No minimum size	Open Year Round	No limit
Spotted seatrout	12"	Open Year Round	No limit
Sturgeon, Atlantic	None may be taken	CLOSED	None may be taken
Tautog	16"	Closed May 12 – July 16 and Sept. 1-28	5 (3 from April 1 – May 11)
Weakfish (Sea trout)	13"	Open Year Round	1
White perch	8" (Tidal water)	Open Year Round	No limit in tidal waters; 25 in non-tidal waters

Changes from 2011 whether tentative or final are in red. Consult Division website [www.fw.delaware.gov](http://www.fw.delaware.gov) for latest updates.

\* Striped bass recreational season closed on spawning grounds (Nanticoke River, C & D Canal, and Delaware River and their respective tributaries north of the southern most jetty of the C & D Canal) during April and May. Non-offset circle hooks required on spawning grounds. Delaware waters of DE River, DE Bay, and their tributaries slot-limit season July 1 through August 31 (slot size limit 20-inch to 26-inch TL). Striped bass **are not** permitted to be retained if taken with a recreational gill net..

\*\* Carapace length measured from rear of eye socket to posterior edge of body shell.

† Harvest limit for a vessel or shore angler is one shark from Group A or B below.

Sharks Group A – No Closed Season – shortfin mako, porbeagle, blue, oceanic white-tip, thresher, finetooth, blacknose, Atlantic sharpnose, and bonnethead.

Sharks Group B – Season Closed May 15 through July 15 in NJ, DE, MD, VA waters – tiger shark, nurse, lemon, blacktip, spinner, bull, great hammerhead, scalloped hammerhead, smooth hammerhead, and silky.

No limit & open year round for the following species: Atlantic sharpnose, blacknose, bonnethead and finetooth sharks; All other large and small coastal shark species must be released.

†† See Map in 2012 Fishing Guide.

**All recreational gill nets** must be out of the water in the Delaware Bay and the Atlantic Ocean during the periods in 2012 on **May 1-6, 11-13, 18-20, 25-28; June 1-3, 8-10,15-17 and 22-30**. No gill nets may be fished between Cape Henlopen Point and the northern boundary of Beach Plum Island Nature Preserve at any time between May 1 and November 30 and no gill nets may be fished between the northern boundary of Beach Plum Island Nature Preserve and the Murderkill River at any time between May 1 and June 30. Other restrictions apply to recreational gill nets. Fisheries Section, Division of Fish & Wildlife, 89 Kings Highway, Dover, DE 19901, (302)739-9914 ; (302)739-9916 or [www.fw.delaware.gov](http://www.fw.delaware.gov)

**THIS TABLE IS ONLY A SUMMARY, DEPARTMENT REGULATIONS AND STATE LAWS PREVAIL**

Summary of Current ***Recreational*** Fish Regulations in Delaware for **2012 (Freshwater species)**

Species	Recreational Minimum Size Limit	Recreational Season	Recreational Creel Limit per Angler
American eel	6"	Open Year Round	50
Largemouth bass (all waters except Becks)	12"	Open Year Round	6
<i>Becks Pond</i>	15"	<i>Open Year Round</i>	2
Smallmouth bass	None between & including 12" & 17"	Open Year Round	6, no more than 1 > 17"
Hybrid striped bass	(Only occur in Lums Pond) 15"	Open Year Round	2
Panfish* (non-tidal waters) See species list below	No minimum size	Open Year Round	50; but, no more than 25 per species
Panfish* (tidal waters) not including white perch	No minimum size	Open Year Round	No limit
Catfish (all species)	No minimum size	Open Year Round	No limit
Trout (Rainbow, Brown, & Brook)	No minimum size	Streams - Opens Apr. 7; Ponds - Opens March 3	6 (4 in restricted streams **); 6 in ponds
White perch (tidal waters)	8"	Open Year Round	No limit
White perch (non-tidal waters)	No minimum size	Open Year Round	25

\* Panfish include bluegill, redear, pumpkinseed, black crappie, white crappie, white perch and yellow perch.

\*\* Restricted streams meaning those designated as fly-fishing only (White Clay Creek from a point 25 yards above Thompsons Bridge to the Pennsylvania state line).